

School Committee Meeting Minutes  
Lura A. White School  
October 28, 2003

Present: Donald Parker, Chairperson  
Bob Prescott  
Hugh Muffoletto  
Gary Bourassa, arrived at 6:45 p.m.  
Paul Wilson, arrived at 6:50 p.m.

Also Present: Dr. Thomas Scott, Superintendent  
Thomas Walsh, SPED Director  
Jane Cook

Meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm.

Public Participation:

As there was no public participation the meeting moved to discuss old business.

Hugh Muffoletto motioned to approve the minutes of October 7, 2003. Paul Wilson seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Mr. Muffoletto motioned to approve the minutes of October 14, 2003. Motion was seconded by Mr. Wilson and approved. Mr. Muffoletto motioned to accept the minutes of the Executive Session of October 14, 2003. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Payables Warrant 421 for \$327,154.69 was reviewed and approved.

While waiting for some committee members to arrive the members moved on to discuss the status of the move to the middle school. Dr. Scott feels that we are in good shape overall, should we get the approval to move in. Dr. Scott believes that we should be able to orchestrate the move with our own crew of staff and several volunteers. Jackson Construction CO. will be paying our custodial staff who has been working on cleaning and prepping the building for opening.

If the School Building Committee grants permission for the school to open, Dr. Scott would like to change the Professional Development Day that is currently scheduled for January 2, 2004 to Monday, November 10, 2003. This change would create a long weekend for students and allow the teachers to come in and prepare their rooms after the move. This change would need to be approved by the teachers and would alter the school calendar's end of school date by one day. The committee feels that this would be a good idea, provided the teachers agree.

The committee discussed the usage of the middle school's gymnasium. It was the understanding of the Recreation Council that the gym would only be used by school organizations. However, the committee feels that it should also be available to the

Recreation Council but with more stringent rules. Dr. Scott would like to come back at a later date with a proposal for the use of the gym. Committee members agreed to this as Mass Development has also expressed interest in utilizing the gym.

Dr. Scott informed the committee that the state had changed its Circuit Breaker reimbursement rate to 27.62%, down from an anticipated 65%. This figure is a preliminary one and is subject to change again. This change impacts the budget by \$116,000.00 but since high school tuition reimbursement is lower than projected there is money in the budget to cover the difference.

Dr. Scott informed the committee of the “Becoming a Love & Logic Parent” course currently in its fifth week. Seven parents are involved and the course seems to be doing well.

The committee moved on to discuss the new building update. Sebastian Carbone is currently coordinating the cleaning of the building. November 12 is the current target date, and according to the electrical inspector and Charlie Schultz, it is possible that we could get partial occupancy by Friday. This would allow access to all areas of the school except the auditorium. One major concern is the installation of the furniture for the building. Computers may not be available for the target date of school opening.

Committee members interrupted the meeting to attend the School Building Committee at 7 p.m. The meeting resumed at 7:30 p.m.

Dr. Scott presented the District Goals of the school district. They are broken down into four main areas: Curriculum, Facilities, Climate and Community.

The objective of the Curriculum Goal is to increase student achievement. Dr. Scott laid out target performance goals in English Language Arts, Math, Reading and Science because they are the areas measured by MCAS. Under each goal is a target area of improvement that is based on formulas that the state gives to us. Under ELA a writing program will be implemented for grades K-8 because that area needs some improvement. There is a need to work with the high population of SPED children so that they can progress as necessary. The same will also be done for elementary (grade 3) reading. A Math Action Plan, discussed at an earlier meeting, is currently being implemented in more detail. Math improvement is the main target this year.

The second goal, Facilities, will encompass the implementation of the Student/Parent Handbook for the middle school and the development of one for the elementary school this year. Dr. Scott would also like to work with the Devens Education Advisory Committee. He would like to plan for an extension of their contract after 2006 to educate the children of Devens or at least work with them to determine the best interest of the Devens children.

Climate, the third goal, will create a learning environment of care and respect. The target objectives are to create a school where children are working constructively, are respectful and respected and they can learn in a safe and encouraging environment.

The fourth goal, Community, will incorporate working with parents to keep them apprised of what is going on in school and having them be a full member of the school. The idea of better communication between school, home and public is of great concern.

Dr. Scott was asked by committee members to look into whether or not regular quarterly meetings could be set up between the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee to increase communication. Other ideas were offered to increase communication with the public. Perhaps we can present a factual sheet to the public via newspapers or visits to local organizations that discuss what grants or funding we are looking into and how the receipt or declination of the funds would affect the budget. By doing this the hope is that the community will understand and be better educated on the needs of the school when budget finalization issues arise.

The committee members asked if one of the goals for the district should be to look into getting accreditation for our schools. By starting the process now it will be a priority next year. Dr. Scott noted that the pre-school will be getting its accreditation this year and that the kindergarten is in line to receive its accreditation next year. This is part of a grant received for the pre-school and in January a team will visit to review the process that has taken four years.

Mr. Bourassa motioned to approve the District Goals. The motion was seconded by Mr. Muffoletto and approved.

The committee voted to go into Executive Session at 10:10 p.m. to discuss Dr. Scott's evaluation.

After the Executive Session the meeting was adjourned. A motion to end the meeting was made. The motion was seconded and approved.

Submitted by: Karen Gutheil